




EXHIBIT 56

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THE JACK FAQ

FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JACK KIRBY

PAGE 1 • PAGE 2 • PAGE 3 • PAGE 4 • PAGE 5

How is "Darkseld" pronounced?

As if spelled "dark side," as in "the dark side of man's nature."

That's how Kirby always pronounced it around me. But at least once, when some fan who pronounced it "dark seed" was excitedly telling Jack his theories about the character, Jack went along with it, rather than correct the kid. And the kid went around telling everyone who'd previously told him he had the name wrong, "No, I was right. That's how Jack Kirby pronounced it."

Jack occasionally did that with people. He hated to dampen enthusiasm and passion, and so would often "go with" what others felt or believed. So his attitude was kind of like, "If you want to pronounce it your way, go right on ahead."

How did Jack feel about other writers imposing their political beliefs on Captain America?

I covered that in [this article](#). Basically, he thought Captain America was bigger than any one writer's momentary politics, which is why he didn't inject his own into the stories he wrote.

Why did Jack change his name from Kurtzberg to Kirby?

Well, it certainly wasn't from any desire to hide the fact that he was Jewish, which is something that has occasionally been suggested by folks who didn't know him. Jack was very proud of his heritage and faith.

When he was starting out in his career, he was somewhat frantic to make a living and very prolific. In many of the publications in which his early work appeared, he did multiple strips and, like other artists in that situation, signed them with an array of pen names. These included Bob Brown, Jack Curtiss, Lance Kirby, Teddy, Ted Grey and many others. It wasn't so much a matter of concealing one's religion as of having a name that sounded like a professional cartoonist.

Finally, when he began working with Joe Simon, Joe suggested Jack

[Front Page](#)
[NEWS from me](#)
[NEWS Archives](#)
[NOTES from me](#)
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[Broadway](#)
[Las Vegas](#)
[Animation](#)
[Comics](#)
 • [Jack Kirby](#)
 • [The Jack FAQ](#)
 • [Alternate Covers](#)
 • [Convention Guide](#)
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pick one name and stick with it. He picked Jack Kirby. In later years, he got quite irate if someone suggested it was to hide his lineage.

Is it true that when Martin Goodman (owner of Marvel Comics) sold the company, Kirby and some of the other artists soaked Goodman for big bucks to sign releases?

False. This story was circulated during Jack's infamous battle with Marvel Comics over the return of his original artwork. A Marvel editor was quoted in some sources as spreading it, and claiming Stan Lee had told him that. Stan told me he absolutely never said or heard of such a thing, and the editor in question recently claimed to me he'd either been misquoted or misinformed — I'm not sure which. Whatever, he no longer believes it, and there is no evidence in Kirby's files of any such soaking and apparently none in Marvel's, either.

Did Jack ever intend to kill off Thor and do the New Gods at Marvel?

Jack came up with the concept for New Gods while at Marvel but he never had any intention of doing it there. At the time, he had become convinced that Marvel was reneging on various promises to him of financial participation in characters he'd co-created. He therefore was not about to give them another idea unless there was a significant change in the way they did business. That did not happen so, as you can see, his last few years at Marvel were not as rich with new characters. Ideas were forever coming to him but he was saving them to offer DC or any other potential publisher that might emerge.

Did Jack design Spider-Man's costume?

No. Steve Ditko designed the distinctive costume we all know and love. Jack did claim to have presented the idea to Stan Lee of doing a hero named Spiderman (no hyphen) who walked on walls and had other spider-themed powers — a claim which Stan vociferously denies.

But for all the things Jack did well, he was not great at being interviewed. He occasionally got carried away or confused. There was one interview where, without realizing what he was saying, he said he'd created Superman. Needless to say, he never really believed that but somehow, that's what came out of his mouth.

This kind of thing most often occurred when the topic veered near an instance where Jack felt he'd been undercredited and undercompensated, and Spider-Man was such a case. In at least one such conversation, he misspoke and claimed he'd designed the costume for the final version of Spider-Man. I'm guessing the gaffe had something to do with the fact that he did pencil the cover of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 with the first appearance of that costume. There were a number of cases where Jack designed a character on a cover, and then Don Heck or Dick Ayers or someone else drew the interior story, following his design. In this case, however, the cover was drawn after Stan had rejected one drawn wholly by Ditko.

Jack knew that. And he also knew what it was like to have someone else claim credit for your ideas. So he very much regretted the error.

What did Jack do on the first stories of Iron Man and Daredevil?

The first Iron Man story was wholly drawn by Don Heck. The first Daredevil story was drawn mainly by Bill Everett. Steve Ditko and Sol Brodsky completed the inking, mostly by filling in backgrounds. Kirby aided Everett in some undetermined manner, though he definitely did not do full breakdowns as has been erroneously reported about this story and the first Iron Man.

These falsehoods, I had a hand in spreading back in the early

seventies. At the time, Jack claimed to have laid out those stories and, I repeated his claim in print — though not before checking with Heck who said, in effect, "Oh, yeah. I remember that. Jack did the layouts." We all later realized he was mistaken. Soon after, I met Everett and found him to be equally confused. He initially confirmed it and then, when I told him I didn't think it looked like Kirby layouts, he said, "Oh, I guess it wasn't."

The confusion in these cases is, I think, understandable. Heck and Everett both did do work over Jack's layouts...just not on those stories. Both also believed that Jack had contributed to the plots of those debut appearances — recollections that do not match those of Stan Lee. (Larry Lieber did the script for the first Iron Man story from a plot that Stan gave him.)

Also, in both cases, Jack had already drawn the covers of those issues and done some amount of design work. He came up with the initial look of Iron Man's armor and he seems to have participated in the design of Daredevil's first costume. My suspicion, after interviewing both Kirby and Everett on the topic and getting only vague remembrances from each, is that Jack worked up a costume and Everett modified it — to what extent, we'll probably never know. Everett did tell me that Jack had come up with the idea of Daredevil's billy club.

One of the things you have to keep in mind when researching this kind of thing, or evaluating conflicting accounts, is that you're often dealing with people who have or had truly rotten memories. Jack's was sporadic, at least when was speaking to the world on a convention panel or for an interview. He was a lot better in private conversations, especially with people he trusted. Stan almost brags about how poor his memory is, and Bill Everett had what we now politely term "alcohol-related problems" at the time of *Daredevil* #1.

Further muddying up the memories on this one is the fact that Jack, in effect, drew the first page of that first Daredevil story. In the rush to get that seriously-late book to press, there wasn't time to complete Page One, so Stan had Sol Brodsky slap together a paste-up that employed Kirby's cover drawing. You may note Artie Simek's lettering on that one page, whereas Sam Rosen lettered the rest of the issue.

The biggest question here is what else Jack did on the first Daredevil story. Everett volunteered to me that Jack had "helped him" though he wouldn't — or more likely, couldn't — elaborate on that. He just plain didn't remember it well and in later years, apparently gave others who asked a wide range of answers. They ranged from Jack contributing only encouraging words to working out the entire plot with him. The latter is what Jack recalled after he'd been corrected about actually doing the layouts. Stan says that's not so, and he may be right. Or Everett may have sought out Kirby's help without telling Lee. (Don Heck sometimes did that, as did Wally Wood.)

So there's another one of those "we may never know" questions.



[Click here to read the NEXT PAGE](#)